

PRESS RELEASE

EU Commission Unveils Ambitious Bioeconomy Strategy – Recognising the Sector's Role in Europe's Industrial Competitiveness

Brussels, 27 November 2025

The European Commission today unveiled its comprehensive Bioeconomy Strategy, for the first time positioning the bioeconomy as a cornerstone of both Europe's industrial competitiveness and sustainability. A welcome development for a sector which potential was hampered by regulatory inconsistencies and competition from cheaper fossil materials. This strategic initiative aims to harness locally grown, renewable biological resources to drive innovation and economic growth across the continent, "mobilising Europe's own strength".

The bioeconomy, and especially biotech and biomanufacturing, is a rare sector where Europe leads globally. It encompasses sectors that utilise biological resources to produce food, energy and, importantly, materials used by an increasing number of sectors. In 2023, the EU bioeconomy was already worth €2.7 trillion, accounting for 5% of the EU's GDP and is expected to grow rapidly at global level – a €6.6 trillion opportunity, with other world regions already gearing up with their own industrial plans.

Building on recent reports by the JRC (the EU's Joint Research Centre), the new EU Communication also acknowledges the sheer size of Europe's bioeconomy, employing 17,1 million people in 2023, or **nearly one in ten workers in the EU**. Often considered as a collection of different industries, the bioeconomy is addressed by a large and disparate set of EU legislations leading to regulatory complexities which often prevents its sectors from competing on an equal footing with fossil-based ones, notably on materials. This is something the new Strategy sets to rectify. At the same time, what is already the third iteration of **the Bioeconomy Strategy, now aims also to turn words into action**, outlining a large set of regulatory actions to support the bioeconomy and its industrial component, to be rolled out between now and 2030, and with a clear long-term vision for 2040.

The bioeconomy's industrial segment is upheld by the forest-based sector which represents one in five manufacturing companies, creating jobs in the EU's industrial heartland but also in rural areas. To support it, the European Commission commits to leverage Europe's strong domestic and sustainable biomass base for industrial production. The strategy also emphasises the efficient use of biomass, aiming to make it more circular and direct it toward higher-value applications. A focus of the strategy is to strengthen and **scale up bio-based sectors by unlocking investments and markets, strengthening demand and identifying the important gaps in funding and regulatory obstacles** which have impacted the sector's growth and its capacity to innovate.

Recognising the importance of bio-based products to both its climate and industrial targets, the Commission acknowledges the need for a framework that promotes their competitiveness compared to fossil-based products. This includes revising the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methods to strengthen biogenic carbon accounting and improve comparability of bio-based materials. The Commission is also considering bio-based content requirements under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and supporting the uptake of bio-based plastics under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR). While specific targets are not mentioned, these aspects are expected to be addressed in forthcoming legislation.

Quotes from Jori Ringman, Cepi Director General

"Taken together, we are worth as much as the largest industrial sectors of the EU, we employ even more people, and we are meant to take an increasingly strategic role as suppliers of bio-based and circular material solutions that are grown in Europe and produced with European technology. It is a sector committed to Europe unlike any other."

"Until now, circular bioeconomy sectors have been tasked to run hurdles while the fossil competitors could sprint. It is time to change that. We have a strategy, now let's move to action!"

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For more information on Industry commitments,
please consult:

[Cepi's Sustainable Product Pledge](#)

[Cepi's Pledge to support the 3 billion trees initiative](#)

[The 4evergreen cross-industry alliance](#)

About Cepi:

Cepi is the European association representing the paper industry. We offer a wide range of renewable and recyclable wood-based fibre solutions to EU citizens: from packaging to textile, hygiene and tissue products, printing and graphic papers as well as specialty papers, but also bio-chemicals for food and pharmaceuticals, bio-composites and bioenergy.

We are a responsible industry: 91% of our raw materials are sourced in European Union and certified as sustainable, 92% of the water we use is returned in good condition to the environment. We are the world champion in recycling at the rate of 75.1%. At the forefront of the decarbonisation and industrial transformation of our economy, we embrace digitalisation and bring 21 billion value addition to the European economy and €4.5 billion investments annually. Through its 19 national associations, Cepi gathers 470 companies operating 842 mills across Europe and directly employing more than 174,000 people.

More information about the [European pulp and paper sector sustainability performance](#).